Helipad near Sun Temple, Konark

2820. SHRI R.K. ANAND:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Orissa has built a helipad within 2 Km. radius of the Sun Temple at Konark;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Archaeological Survey of India has asked the State Government not to use the helipad as it poses a threat to the security of the 13th Century World Heritage site; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what action taken/proposed to be taken against such construction within a World Heritage site?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has requested the State Government of Orissa to shift the helipad to a distance of 5 Kms. away from the Sun Temple, Konark, to avoid any future damage to the ecology of the surroundings as well as to avoid air vibration of the helicopter which may affect the structure of the monument. The Government of Orissa has accordingly been instructed to identify another piece of land for shifting of the helipad.

Passengers stranded at Chennai Airport

2821. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that international passengers of Air India were stranded at Chennai Airport recently and the Air India had totally failed to retrieve them for more than 14 hours in the airport itself whereas airlines like Malaysia Airlines, Singapore Airlines could give excellent facilities in a similar situation;

(b) whether it is due to system failure or human failure or both; and

(c) what are the special measures envisaged to meet such situations in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Air India A310 aircraft while operating flight from Mumbai to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur *via* Chennai on 25th June, 2005 was delayed at Mumbai due to engineering problem. Passengers at Chennai who checked-in for scheduled departure were stranded at the airport. In view of the creeping delay, passengers at Chennai Airport were kept advised of the delay and refreshments were served. Though hotel accommodation was offered by Air India, the Chennai passengers preferred to stay back in the security hold area and take the delayed flight to their destination. Since the snag on aircraft could not be rectified in time at Mumbai, an alternate flight was arranged by Air India.

(b) and (c) The delay was due to technical snag in the aircraft. In such situations, Air India makes all efforts to repair the technical snag in the shortest possible time or else replacement aircraft is placed in service subject to availability.

Performance of aviation sector

2822. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government in the last five years to keep pace with the private airlines in terms of performance, profits, etc.;

(b) whether the steps undertaken by Government have borne fruit;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) In the domestic sector, Indian Airlines has been competing with private airlines for the past several years. In the international sector, Air India and Indian Airlines face greater competition from foreign airlines than private Indian carriers.

Air India and Indian Airlines constantly endeavour to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the service rendered to the passenger and add value to the product to remain competitive in the market. Some of the measures taken by the two airlines are (i) Fleet Augmentation/renewal; (ii) Focused attention on training to frontline staff